

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 07394 291657Z

47

ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 7394

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US

SUBJECT: U.S. GOVERNORS' DELEGATION MEETS PODGORNYY

USIA FOR IBS, IEE, IPS

1. SUMMARY. SOVIET HEAD OF STATE NIKOLAY PODGORNYY MET MAY 28 WITH A DELEGATION OF EIGHT U.S. GOVERNORS WHO WERE COMPLETING AN ELEVEN-DAY VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION. A FRANK AND CORDIAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS COVERING A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS TOOK PLACE DURING THE ONE HOUR AND 45 MINUTE MEETING IN THE KREMLIN. PODGORNYY SEVERAL TIMES RAISED THE ISSUE OF THE 1974
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 07394 291657Z

TRADE ACT AND STRESSED THAT THE USSR WELCOMED

WESTERN AND AMERICAN ASSISTANCE AND TRADE, BUT HE ASSERTED THAT MOSCOW COULD ALWAYS FIND ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF WESTERN TECHNOLOGY SHOULD THE U.S. REMAIN OPPOSED TO PROVIDING ASSISTANCE WITHOUT PRE-CONDITIONS. HE EMPHASIZED THE KREMLIN'S SUPPORT FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF DETENTE ESPECIALLY IN THE FIELDS OF ARMS REDUCTIONS AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION.

2. PODGORNYY APPEARED IN GOOD HEALTH AND EXCELLENT SPIRITS, AND WAS EXTREMELY ADEPT AT TRADING QUIPS WITH THE VISITING AMERICAN POLITICIANS. HE IMPRESSED THE MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION WITH HIS CHARM, WIT, AND WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS RELATIVELY OPENLY SOME OF THE ISSUES IN SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

3. THE MEETING WITH PODGORNYY, ON THE PENULTIMATE DAY OF THE GOVERNORS' VISIT, PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNE FORUM FOR A REASONABLY FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. THE DISCUSSION COVERED A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS RANGING FROM CRIME-IN-THE-STREETS TO THE QUALITY OF EACH COUNTRY'S BEER. PODGORNYY READILY ADMITTED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD ATTEMPTED TO SHOW THE GOVERNORS THE BEST OF WHAT THE USSR HAD TO OFFER, AND HE ALSO CONCEDED THAT SOVIET SOCIETY AND ECONOMY HAD NUMEROUS PROBLEMS WHICH HIS GOVERNMENT HAD NOT YET OVERCOME. HE REPEATEDLY RAISED THE ISSUE OF THE TRADE ACT AND THE JACKSON AMENDMENT, AND HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE USSR STILL SEEKS AMERICAN TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION, BUT IF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT INSISTS ON ATTACHING CONDITIONS TO PURELY ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS, THEN MOSCOW WILL LOOK ELSEWHERE IN THE WEST FOR TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE. PODGORNYY POINTED OUT THAT SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT BE BENEFICIAL TO THE BUSINESSES WHICH EXIST IN THE VARIOUS STATES REPRESENTED IN THE DELEGATION.

4. ALTHOUGH APPEARING SOMEWHAT FLUSHED, PODGORNYY SEEMED IN GOOD HEALTH, AND HIS PERFORMANCE COMPLETELY CHARMED THE MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION. HIS BANTER ABOUT CHILDREN, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO (HE CLAIMED THAT BOTH HE AND BREZHNEV HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO COMPLY WITH CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 07394 291657Z

DOCTORS' ORDERS TO QUIT SMOKING) WAS SPONTANEOUS AND CONVINCING, AND IT REFLECTED AN ALERT AND ATTENTIVE MIND.

5. COMMENT: THE GOVERNORS' COMMENTS AFTER THE MEETING INDICATED THAT THEY WERE EXTREMELY IMPRESSED WITH PODGORNYY'S PERFORMANCE AND PERSONALITY. THEY EXPRESSED SOME SURPRISE AT THIS WILLINGNESS TO ADMIT TO SOME SHORTCOMINGS IN THE USSR, AND THEY BELIEVED THAT HE WAS

A POLITICAL LEADER FAR SUPERIOR TO THOSE WHO HAD BEEN
ENCOUNTERED EARLIER IN THE VISIT. WHILE NO BASIC
POSITIONS WERE CHANGED NOR NEW GROUND BROKEN DURING THE
MEETING, THE KREMLIN OBVIOUSLY SCORED A PUBLIC
RELATIONS VICTORY BY BRINGING UP ITS HEAVY ARTILLERY
AT THE LAST MOMENT.
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